CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 26 March 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Abdelhamid Semichi (Algeria)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 619th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I am particularly happy to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to His Excellency the President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. René Felber. The visit by His Excellency Mr. Felber is certainly appreciated by all of us, as he is a distinguished figure whose outstanding political career began in Neuchâtel, where he presided over the State Council in 1984. In his capacity as National Councillor, he was a member of the commissions on foreign trade and on foreign affairs, and since he joined the Federal Council on 1 January 1988, he has been Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. On 4 December 1991 His Excellency Mr. René Felber was elected President of the Confederation for the current year. I would like to emphasize the important contribution made by Switzerland to our work and its interest in all questions relating to disarmament. The presence of the President of the Swiss Confederation today in our midst is a further testimony to this. I would also like to underscore the active role that has been played by His Excellency Mr. René Felber at the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and especially his dedication to multilateral diplomacy. He is well known to us all here in the United Nations Office at Geneva, where I have the pleasure of welcoming him today. I would like to thank him for coming to our meeting, and I am sure that all members of the Conference will follow his statement with particular attention.

On the list of speakers today, besides His Excellency the President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. René Felber, are the representatives of the United Kingdom, Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, Canada, Bulgaria and Venezuela. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to His Excellency the President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Mr. René Felber.

Mr. FELBER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, I was most touched by the kind words you have just addressed to me, and in my turn I would like to congratulate you most sincerely on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that thanks to your well-tried abilities you will be able to conduct the difficult task which falls to you at a time when the work of your Conference has entered a crucial phase. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Berasategui, a man of experience, who has taken over from Ambassador Komatina as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I would also like to express my pleasure at meeting in his new duties officially Mr. Antoine Blanca, the new Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

I am happy to be with you today for a few moments. Your commitment to the cause of disarmament is well known and my Government is pleased to see that the new spirit of cooperation in international relations has spread to your work as well. The important successes achieved in the last few years,

(Mr. Felber, Switzerland)

such as the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, the START Agreement and the announcement by the United States and the Russian Federation of unilateral reductions and plans for future negotiations also, I am sure, give new impetus to your work. Allow me also to welcome other initiatives, such as those taken by several countries in Latin America to ban weapons of mass destruction from their region and to cut back conventional arms. They prove that cooperation in security matters is not limited only to the former antagonists in the cold war. My country, which has always worked for the peaceful settlement of disputes, also welcomes with relief the beginnings of the peace processes in the Middle East, Cambodia, Yugoslavia and other regions which are unfortunately still experiencing conflicts. I wish to remind you of our resolve to contribute to peace-keeping operations.

The end of the cold war and progress in peace have unfortunately not eliminated all sources of instability, nor all potential for conflict. We are living in a world which remains complex and faced with a host of threats. The risks engendered by the spread of weapons of mass destruction are not the least among them. More than ever, my country is concerned about nuclear proliferation. The example of Iraq and the disturbing rumours concerning illegal sales of nuclear materials show just how real the danger is. My Government is ready, in agreement with other States, to make an active contribution to efforts undertaken in order to put an end to the brain drain from the former Soviet Union. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the main pillar of the present non-proliferation system. We welcome the fact that a number of States - including nuclear Powers - have recently acceded to it or have announced their intention to do so in the near future. The NPT has thus become an almost universal instrument, which seems to us to auger well for its future. This universality, as well as the achievement of new advances in the field of the reduction of nuclear weapons over the last three years or the three years to come, should, we feel, make it easier to extend the Treaty substantially beyond 1995. However, the case of Iraq has highlighted the urgent need for a review of the procedures attached to the safeguards applied by the International Atomic Energy Agency under the NPT, in order to restore their credibility. My country possesses no chemical weapons, nor any other weapons of mass destruction, and has no intention of acquiring such weapons. My Government is impatiently awaiting the rapid conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. It is true that the problem of verification is a difficult one, and for my part I would not wish to play down its complexity. I am, however, aware that thanks to your tenacious efforts all the elements of the problem have been clearly identified. The compromise which you are now elaborating will certainly have a great impact on verification of future disarmament agreements. My Government attaches very special importance to this aspect. The present trend rightly favours the strengthening of challenge inspections. It would therefore be desirable for us to be able to draw on the precedent supplied by the chemical weapons convention for this sort of inspection in future treaties. As for verification in industrial facilities, we organized a symposium at the end of January in Basel, which I hope was useful. The chemical industry in my country, of whose importance you are aware, realizes that verification is necessary. It has reason to believe that a strengthening of confidence will certainly have beneficial impacts on its own activities and on freedom of

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trade. Routine inspections will have a place in the convention. Here too we are expecting you to come up with innovative solutions. Too costly a system, entailing a massive bureaucracy, which moreover would not be totally reliable, is in nobody's interest. So I would encourage you to look for simple solutions combining flexibility with maximum deterrence.

A week ago my Austrialian colleague preceded me as a speaker on this podium. His very important statement, I believe, is a valuable contribution to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. I know that the members of the Committee, under the expert guidance of its Chairman, Ambassador von Wagner, are sparing no effort to iron out the final difficulties.

Allow me here to express my Government's gratitude for your work. Switzerland long ago abandoned any policy based on power, and its military resources are solely intended to defend the country. That is why disarmament, provided it is balanced and verifiable, has always enjoyed our support. With the same consistency, we have never abandoned our commitment to international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. More than a century ago, in this city, eminent citizens brought humanitarian law into the world. Sixty years ago, these very premises hosted the great disarmament conference in which Switzerland, like many of your countries, participated with the hope that appeared to be founded on reason - the hope of general and complete disarmament. Unfortunately our faith soon turned into dark bitterness. For several years now we have been following the work of your Conference very closely. Although we were unable to take part in the negotiations, we have ratified all the agreements that have emerged from your Conference. The gradual improvement in the status of observers has allowed us to make more concrete contributions. We were thus able to make use of the experience acquired by our military laboratory in Spiez and the expertise available in our chemical industry.

The concern for effectiveness, and the history of the Conference too, explain why there are currently only a limited number of member States in this body. However, we believe that, since a new international security system is emerging and since the United Nations is now making efforts to establish a register on arms transfers - in which Switzerland will participate - the question of the composition of the Conference on Disarmament and its agenda ought to be raised again. You will undoubtedly recall that my country has applied to become a full member. Today it is no longer possible to consider that disarmament is something to be dealt with between blocs, since the blocs have disappeared. Since all States are concerned, each one should have the opportunity to express its views and participate on an equal footing. Hence it seems to me inevitable that after the chemical weapons convention is concluded, the future role of the Conference on Disarmament should be the subject of in-depth discussion with all interested States.

All this will make clear to you my country's wish to be more closely involved in worldwide disarmament efforts. At the same time I would like to assure you that we wish to maintain our traditional policy of hosting organizations and international conferences. In so doing, we also intend to

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support negotiating processes as much as we possibly can. We are proud of this tradition. We wish to maintain it and to ensure that such meetings and conferences can take place smoothly and that diplomats and experts enjoy the best possible conditions to carry out their tasks. On the basis of this traditional openness, Switzerland has put forward Geneva as a candidate for the headquarters of the future organization for chemical weapons control. We would be pleased to host that institution here. It would be offered the same conditions we have given to the other organizations which have successively established themselves in Geneva. Given the special importance which my country attaches to the elimination of chemical weapons throughout the world once and for all, the Swiss Government would be prepared to make a special contribution of 2.5 million francs to the preparatory commission towards financing infrastructure costs in Geneva during the transitory phase. Furthermore, my country would be prepared to commit an equivalent amount for the training of inspectors for the future organization. A training programme could be drawn up by the AC laboratory in Spiez, which, because of its experience, has been entrusted with various expert missions, notably in the context of Security Council resolution 687. The Swiss Chemical industry would also be prepared to cooperate in this programme, in order to allow trainee inspectors to become familiar with the verification of industrial facilities. If our offer meets with your approval, its implementation will of course be carried out in close cooperation with the prepratory commission. In offering this training programme, Switzerland wishes to underscore the importance it attaches to verification. We believe that it is through verification that an effective contribution can be made to the establishment of trust, which is so important for maintaining peace in international relations. My country knows that trust is not a gift in itself but that, on the contrary, it has to be gained and kept. It is this trust that will allow us, in the final analysis, to dedicate our efforts and resources to a greater extent to the progress and well-being of our peoples.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank His Excellency the President of the Swiss Confederation and head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for his important statement and the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I shall now suspend the plenary meeting in order to accompany His Excellency Mr. René Felber and take leave of him. I invite you to stay in the Council chamber as we will resume our meeting in five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We shall now resume the work of the 619th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. We shall now listen to the other speakers on the list. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): May I first welcome the important statement we have just heard from His Excellency the President of the Swiss Confederation? It was an honour and a pleasure to have him with us as President of the country host to this Conference and also a very active contributor to our work.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

It was four and a half years ago that I first spoke in this Conference. And today alas this is my last statement. As is the custom among us on such occasions I am speaking on a purely personal basis.

We are all keenly aware of the dramatic changes which have taken place during the past four and a half years in the political and strategic international context in which this Conference works. The long-standing East/West confrontation has gone and the massive arms build-up in Europe is rapidly being dismantled. But problems remain, all too many. What now faces the international community is a fragmented dispersal of political tensions and military power, to be found to varying degrees within almost every continent.

Logic would suggest that in this multi-polar world global arms control and disarmament would have a still greater contribution to make. And I believe this to be the case. East/West confrontation called for East/West solutions: fragmented risks lend themselves more to global action. In the changed circumstances, non-proliferation of armaments has become as much a matter of international concern as arms reductions. And it is above all in non-proliferation that global measures can make a real impact. Faced with these new opportunities what should be the priorities of the Conference on Disarmament?

The top priority is obvious: to complete the negotiations for a chemical weapons convention as quickly as possible. I personally came to the Conference with this aim - a ban, a total ban, on chemical weapons, as my main goal and one close to my own heart. I am sorry to leave the Conference before this goal has been achieved. But at least last Thursday we may have seen the beginning of the breakthrough we have all been waiting for for so long. The initiative of the Australian Foreign Minister and the very positive reception to it by so many delegates gives me much hope. I am confident the convention will happen this year. The negotiations only need a final big push and we are there. I cannot believe this Conference will fail to seize such a wide open opportunity.

There are two aspects of the chemical weapons negotiations which need to be solved quickly. The first is verification, and I shall return to that in a few minutes. The second is destruction. A credible programme to destroy existing chemical weapons within a limited time-frame is one of the most important features of the convention. It is a vital element for the national security of each State party. Unfortunately it has become clear that serious problems remain for a major chemical weapons possessor. These problems will have to be resolved in the next very few months, if a convention is to be concluded this year. A first step in that direction has been taken in putting the issue squarely on the table. A full solution is now a matter of urgency.

Before I turn to the other major outstanding issue, verification, I should like to mention a question which normally only emerges in the technical side of the negotiations. I am referring to the use of experiments on animals as part of the implementation of the convention. At one stage of the negotiations it seemed that successful implementation might require large

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numbers of experiments on animals. Happily the situation has improved. The present structure of the chemical schedules shows that toxicity no longer bears directly upon the verification regime to which individual chemicals will be subject. To the extent that toxicity might be included in guidelines for risk appraisal in routine inspections, precise toxicity measurement will not be important. When the convention enters into force the schedules will be in place, and toxicity levels of the scheduled chemicals are in very many cases already common knowledge. Further determination is unlikely to be required exclusively for the purpose of the convention. Even in the case of new substances proposed for inclusion it is likely that they will be appraised on the basis of toxicity data submitted by the proposing State.

If there are cases - and it seems they should be few, if any - when the convention's technical secretariat or an individual State party considers it essential to undertake toxicity determinations for the purpose of the convention, I think there is widespread agreement that this should whenever possible be conducted through non-animal alternative methods such as cell culture or organ culture; and if this is not practical, with the least number of animals compatible with demonstrating the toxic features of a substance - but I would hope the use of animals would rarely or never have to be resorted to. I suggest that this minimalistic approach be recommended to the preparatory committee and technical secretariat of the convention.

I would argue that the most important conceptual advance in arms control and disarmament in recent times has been the recognition of the vital role of verification. Important advances have been made on a regional and bilateral basis - in the case of Europe through the CSCE process and East/West arms agreements - most recently the "open skies" agreement, which allows States parties to conduct aerial surveillance over each other's territory. But much has been achieved also at the global level. An early breakthrough came with the establishment of the safeguards system of IAEA. The United Nations Secretary-General's powers of investigation of use of chemical and biological weapons broke further ground. The United Nations Special Commission on Iraq has taken verification on behalf of the world community to a new dimension of intrusiveness and effectiveness. Agreement has been reached recently in IAEA on strengthening the implementation of its safeguard arrangements by encouraging the Director General to use his powers of challenge inspection in certain categories of undeclared facilities. Work is underway which I hope will give the biological weapons Convention the verification provisions it badly lacks, technically difficult though this will be. It is a story of incremental progress, of a growing acceptance that verification to be effective has to be rigorous and intrusive.

The negotiations for a chemical weapons convention are part of that incremental process. The most rewarding aspect of my own work in the Conference on Disarmament has been the search for a strong system of verification for the convention, in particular through challenge inspection. My authorities, after a dozen or so practical trials, concluded that there was no site so sensitive that we could not allow some form of access within it and that it was possible to reconcile the degree of intrusiveness necessary for effective verification with the protection of legitimate security interests.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

We have had to recognize that not all our negotiating partners could at this stage accept as open a regime as we favoured. I cannot hide my personal disappointment that this is so. Nevertheless the prospects are good for consensus on verification procedures more extensive than in any other global agreement, procedures which will give the convention a significant degree of deterrence against violation, even if not all I and many others had hoped for.

Nor will that be the end of the story. Verification and monitoring are one of the most promising growth areas in global disarmament. I believe the hard decisions will increasingly be taken in the years ahead to give international verification the teeth needed if it is to bite.

Attitudes are changing. At the most recent General Assembly a step was taken which had proved impossible at earlier attempts, namely the establishment by the United Nations of a register of arms transfers. In many parts of the world the dividing line is not easy to identify between a level of armaments sufficient to enable a State to defend itself against threats to its security and the excessive levels which become a threat to the security of neighbouring States. In making such judgements the world community needs a basis of accurate and reliable information. In the aftermath of the Gulf war the British Prime Minister, Mr. Major, and others proposed that, as a first step towards providing such accurate and reliable information, the United Nations should operate a register of transfers between States of the most destabilizing types of armaments. This proposal met with a very high degree of support in the General Assembly: the register has been established and is now open for data from Governments.

In setting up the register the General Assembly called for consideration of further practical measures to increase transparency in armaments. The Conference on Disarmament has been asked to make its contribution. With its unparalleled experience of global disarmament and arms control this Conference should be able to provide a major input. Unfortunately it is still unclear whether the Conference will be able to seize this opportunity. Caution is right. But it would be wrong to let our response be dictated by fear of what is new.

The Conference has to adapt to the changing circumstances of the world which it exists to serve. Imagination and flexibility are needed, and even a dash of daring would not be out of place. Once the chemical weapons convention has been concluded, the time will have come to make a thorough reappraisal of the agenda of the Conference, to ask whether the Conference has a worthwhile role as the world moves into the twenty-first century and if so what that role is.

Perhaps surprisingly part of the answer can be found in a list dating back to 1979, namely the "decalogue" of issues inspired by the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Nuclear weapons in all aspects; chemical weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; conventional weapons; reduction of military budgets; reduction of armed forces; collateral measures; confidence-building measures; effective

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verification methods - these figured largely in the minds of our predecessors in 1979: they would not make a bad beginning for a new agenda for the future work of the Conference.

Looking forward over the next few years, I would expect the Conference work to widen its focus from weapons of mass destruction to other weaponry, and from disarmament and bans to a wide range of non-proliferation issues. I would see its role changing from negotiating large-scale agreements, of which perhaps the chemical weapons convention might prove the last, to negotiating agreements of narrower scope and maybe in some cases of a less binding character - guidelines, declarations. And more flexibility might be introduced in the Conference's agenda, so that work might rotate between items, depending on prospects of progress.

The future of the Conference will need to be examined together with that of other global disarmament organs, the First Committee and United Nations Disarmament Commission in particular. Will the UNDC still be required, if some of its functions are absorbed within a changed role for the Conference on Disarmament?

There are many questions. One thing is certain, that our Conference needs to change and adapt if it is not to atrophy.

I have found the last four and a half years here in the Conference on Disarmament sometimes frustrating, sometimes infuriating, but always challenging and worthwhile. I think we have made progress together over that time. I am sure you will do even better in the very near future.

I would like to thank all my colleagues in delegations and in the secretariat for all your help and for your companionship. It has been a privilege for me to work with you, and great fun too.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): It is not without emotion that we have just heard the important statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom. Ambassador Solesby has played a particularly important role in the work of our Conference. She was its President last year, as well as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons during its 1988 session. Ambassador Solesby has carried out her duties with objectivity and distinction. I would like to stress that her competence, her knowledge of the complex problems of disarmament and her intelligence have enabled us to appreciate her as a distinguished participant, always equal to the delicate situations that can arise in our work. Surely and certainly we are all going to miss her. I wish her every success in her future activities, and I hope that she will continue to follow our activities, to which she has made such a major contribution. I wish you good luck, Madam.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Donowaki.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): Mr. President, I wish to begin my statement by expressing my delegation's delight at seeing you presiding over the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament at this critical time in its work. My delegation is confident that, under your competent and skilful guidance, we shall not fail to make meaningful progress in carrying out important tasks entrusted to us. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the two preceding Presidents, Ambassador Calovski of Yugoslavia and Ambassador Mutuale Kikanke of Zaire, for their valuable efforts in organizing the work of the Conference at the beginning of this year's sessions. Furthermore, I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the presence this morning of His Excellency Mr. René Felber, President of the Swiss Confederation, and his important statement, to which I listened with great interest.

There is no doubt that the most important task entrusted to us this year is the conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. Indeed, most of us here felt much obliged to the brave initiative taken by President Bush of the United States last May, because it enabled us to resolve some of the long-standing political issues of our negotiations. Thereafter, the question of challenge inspection became our major focus of attention. It soon became an open secret that even among some of the Western group of nations there existed strong reservations as to the wisdom of tabling a proposal that contained a somewhat less intrusive regime of challenge inspection. However, together with the United States, my country, the United Kingdom and Australia decided to go ahead with the tabling of a draft proposal out of our sincere desire to expedite the negotiations rather than keep other delegations waiting any longer.

Fortunately, our previous Chairman of the CW Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Batsanov of the Russian Federation, wasted no time in making the best of the situation. He took on the enormously difficult task of pushing ahead the negotiations utilizing the four-nation proposal together with other material contained in the "rolling text". Thanks to his untiring efforts, we were able to complete one round of deliberations on the full extent of a possible regime of challenge inspection.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its sincere congratulations to our Chairman of the CW Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador von Wagner, for assuming the very important task of completing the negotiations this year. Also, my delegation shares with him the view that our common goal should be attainable, although he may complain at this stage that he does not see what he hears.

As we are all aware, our Chairman could start this year's work with the least of delays, proving that he has behind him blessings from all of us. Furthermore, the appointment of his bureau members, again with the blessing of all of us, proved to be so well considered that the Working Group Chairman, Mr. Morris of Australia, and the other Friends of the Chair are already making all-out efforts in clearing up remaining issues of our negotiations.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

Of course, it is only natural that our Chairman took upon himself the most difficult task of leading us out of the impasse on the question of challenge inspection. My delegation was fully in support of his efforts to find room for any possible trade-offs within the text of the paragraphs of article IX, putting aside for the moment provisions of the protocol on inspection. His energetic and well-intended attempt came close to success but for the last-minute, understandable reservations made by a few of our colleagues. I should like to state that this was a worthwhile exercise, because in this way we were able to ascertain more clearly where the problem areas lay, preparing ourselves for the final wrapping-up stage of our negotations.

The latest and most important contribution in expediting our negotiations came, as we all know, from Australia. The draft text of the convention tabled by the Honourable Senator Evans is, although mostly based on our "rolling text", a product of intensive preparation and consultation. Australia is known for its long-standing commitment and the active roles it played in promoting the cause of prohibiting chemical weapons. As Ambassador O'Sullivan advocated in his plenary statement one year ago, the new text tabled is free from all the brackets and footnotes, which is a great advantage because we know that even a single debracketing, out of hundreds existing in the "rolling text", sometimes requires hours of discussions. We are no longer allowed to indulge in such a luxury. Of course, the Australian draft contains some useful suggestions on some of the unsettled problems, as well as on some aspects of textual arrangements. Also, the draft text will have to be updated in order to reflect the latest progress made in our negotiations. The visit of Senator Evans was like the encounter of our planet called the CD with a powerful meteor called Evans. We were all reminded that our days were numbered unless we came to ourselves. My delegation strongly wishes that our Chairman, Ambassador von Wagner will undertake the task of expediting our negotiations making full use of the valuable Australian contribution.

Apart from the question of challenge inspection, I should like to say a few words on another knotty remaining issue in the chemical weapons negotiations, namely the question of old and abandoned chemical weapons. My delegation is of the view that there must be a way to formulate appropriate language in the convention that would be satisfactory to all the parties concerned in the negotiations, while at the same time ensuring complete destruction of such weapons. My delegation will spare no effort in cooperating with the Friend of the Chair, Ambassador Brotodiningrat, and with all other delegations in finding a solution in such a way.

As for the question of the future seat of the organization, it is my delegation's pleasure to announce, at this juncture, perhaps ahead of some of our colleagues, that my Government has come to the conclusion that The Hague should serve as the ideal site of the future organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons. My delegation will cooperate with Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan, the Friend of the Chair on this question, from this standpoint.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

Now, I wish to turn to the question of a nuclear test ban briefly. I am not speaking on behalf of the group of some Western States as their coordinator on the subject item, but in a national capacity, since my Government has traditionally attached special importance to this issue. Japan has over the years been working for the early realization of a nuclear test ban, and continues to regret the fact that underground nuclear testing, although decreasing in frequency in the last few years, is still being carried out by nuclear-weapon States.

Therefore, Japan was greatly encouraged by the re-establishment of the nuclear test ban Ad Hoc Committee in the CD two years ago, and to see that its substantive work was continued last year also under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Chadha and Ambassador Shah of India.

As I have stated on many occasions, the issue of a nuclear test ban has over the years turned into a highly emotional political issue. The nuclear arms race during the peak years of the cold war had the effect of horrifying the world with the prospect of a nuclear holocaust. Nobody could stop the dangerous arms race. If so, couldn't the nuclear-weapon States at least commit themselves to a nuclear test ban? The nuclear arms race would become impossible then, and nuclear disarmament possible. In this way, the nuclear test ban issue came to acquire a highly political and symbolic character. Confrontation istead of dialogue became a normal phenomenon whenever the issue came up for debate.

One of the healthy effects of the ending of the cold war may be the possibility to look at the issue of a nuclear test ban in its proper perspectives. The discussions that took place in the PTBT Amendment Conference already indicated such a new trend. The deliberations on the issue in the NTB Ad Hoc Committee last year, in which my delegation participated actively, proved that dialogue, instead of confrontation, was both possible and meaningful. We were able to listen to detailed reasoning as to why nuclear testing had to be continued as long as there remained a need to rely on nuclear deterrence, even though its priority might have gone down. If that was the case, could a step-by-step approach offer a solution? Similarly, in view of the growing concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons, could a regime of a nuclear test ban be established with a sufficiently reliable mechanism of verification and compliance? These are precisely the questions that the Ad Hoc Committee should continue to deal with.

My delegation is convinced that the CD is the only appropriate place where the issue of a nuclear test ban should be addressed, since we have the presence of all five nuclear-weapon States and since the CD is the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. It was for this reason that my delegation was much concerned about the delay in the re-establishment of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee this year. Fortunately, as a result of several presidential consultations and several meetings among item coordinators on the subject, agreement on the mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee now appears to be near at hand, and let us hope that the CD will not fail to fulfil its responsibilities on this subject either. Departing from the prepared text, I should like to say that until the end of this session tomorrow, I myself will

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cooperate with you, Mr. President, with the Special Coordinator on this subject item, Ambassador Shah of India, and with all my colleagues to do our best to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee as soon as possible.

It would be remiss of my delegation if no mention was made of the subject of transparency in armaments. Preparations and efforts of a vast number of countries, including my own, went into the adoption last year by the General Assembly of its resolution 46/36 L on transparency in armaments. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is expected to start with data on international transfers of conventional arms, but to be expanded to include military holdings and procurement and even more, is a unique multilateral attempt of historic importance in promoting the cause of arms control and disarmament. Naturally, the Register will have to be worked out in such a way that it will serve as a useful confidence-building measure for the security of all nations. This is why several procedures for the elaboration, adjustment, review and expansion of the Register are provided for in the United Nations resolution. A United Nations panel of governmental technical experts is already in place. In addition, the CD is requested to lend its assistance in establishing the Register as a meaningful mechanism in promoting arms control and disarmament. My delegation hopes that the CD will not fail to meet the expectations of the world on this subject either.

It is with a deep sentimental attachment to the Conference on Disarmament and to all my colleagues around the table that I have to leave Geneva for another assignment. At the same time, I can assure you and my colleagues that my successor, Ambassador Yoshitomo Tanaka, is a fine and highly qualified diplomat the Japanese Foreign Ministry is proud to have.

When I arrived here two and a half years ago, my seat was the fourth from the far left of the left table. Now I find myself seated, although by coincidence, in the middle of the middle table, right across from you, Mr. President, which makes me feel somewhat flattered. The greatest event that took place during my rather short stay here in Geneva was the sweeping change in the outlook of the world. However, I am confident that this change will work in our favour, for the greater expectation and responsibility in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This is because we are now moving away from the era of the past United States-Soviet and Eurocentric disarmament into an era of the globalization of disarmament, as was ably described by our previous Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina, in his farewell speech a month ago.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union had the effect of deepening our concerns about the problem of proliferation of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. This is why Ambassador Marin Bosch's initiative to hold informal discussions on this subject deserves appreciation. Even our work for the conclusion of the CW convention is nothing other than a testimony to the new era of the globalization of disarmament. The Mendoza Agreement and the Cartagena Declaration are other good examples of the new era. The same may be said of the problem of the United Nations Register and the issue of transparency in armaments. Today, arms control and disarmament problems have to be tackled globally by all nations, rather than, as was the case until

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recently, by super-Powers only or in the European continent only. Whether the Conference on Disarmament will be able to adapt itself to the new era, and seize its opportunities, will depend on whether, after the conclusion of the CW convention, a new thinking on the questions of our agenda items, our way of functioning and so forth will be allowed to prevail among us, and I am confident that it will.

Mr. President,

Lastly, may I convey to you again my best wishes for success in your work? Also, I wish to express my special appreciation to our Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, for his unfailing good counsel and support to my delegation and to the CD. It is an honour and priviledge for me that I leave in the same month as he assumed his important functions. My appreciation also goes to all my colleagues in the Conference as well as to all the colleagues from observer States for their warm friendship, understanding and support extended to me and to my delegation. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to all the staff members of the secretariat, including interpreters and clerks, for making my tour of duty here a very pleasant and rewarding one.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Donowaki of Japan for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. Ambassador Donowaki is also going to leave us in the next few days. He has made a valuable contribution to the work of the Conference, with his tact as an experienced diplomat, his kindness and his competence as an intelligent and particularly effective negotiator. I wish to underscore the decisive role played by Ambassador Donowaki in the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Nuclear Test Ban in 1990, and also the role he played when he served as Chairman of that subsidiary body. This year too, Ambassador Donowaki has offered his efforts and made himself available in order that we might reach agreement on the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee, which I hope will be settled in the very near future. I wish Ambassador Donowaki and Mrs. Lily Donowaki much happiness, and we are sure that in his new functions Ambassador Donowaki will continue to exercise his diplomatic skills with the personal qualities that we all appreciate in the service of his country, Japan. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Soo Gil Park.

Mr. PARK (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I take the floor in this session, I would like to begin by congratulating you on presiding over the Conference on Disarmament, the world's single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, and assure you of my delegation's full support for your efforts to discharge your important responsibilities, in particular in achieving substantial progress toward conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. I am certain that this session will benefit greatly from your eminent leadership. I am pleased to take this occasion to express the high admiration of this delegation for the inspiring speech made by the President of the Swiss Confederation and Chief of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency René Felber, this morning. I am also taking this opportunity to express to the new Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui from Argentina, the most heartfelt congratulations on

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his appointment, and best wishes for every success in the fulfilment of his important responsibilities. This morning I learned that two distinguished ambassadors are scheduled to take leave of Geneva soon. I therefore take this occasion to express my admiration for the outstanding contribution Ambassador Donowaki and Ambassador Solesby made to the work of the Conference on Disarmament in their respective capacities as representatives of Japan and the United Kingdom respectively.

As a result of far-reaching global changes, the bipolar system came to an end. During the years of the cold war and of ideological confrontation, the principle of strategic parity was upheld as inviolable. Both sides were watching each other closely to prevent the other from assuming any lead in the arms race. Disarmament was highlighted by talks between the two super-Powers, the former USSR and the United States of America. The end of the cold war, however, has opened up an unprecedented opportunity for the world community to seek a new system of international relations in which the costly burden of arms accumulation is replaced by efforts to ensure the security of all nations at substantially reduced armament levels. During the past several years, in particular, we saw a number of significant disarmament agreements signed, including INF, CFE and START, and certain unilateral nuclear arms reduction measures were also announced.

It is true that the cold war confrontation has now become a thing of the past, but mountains of weapons of mass destruction, huge armies and defence-related industries still remain to be destroyed or converted. In this regard, the Republic of Korea has always been convinced of the necessity of drastically reducing nuclear arsenals well beyond the limitations spelled out in the START Treaty and, therefore, the Republic of Korea welcomes the bold initiatives taken by President George Bush of the United States of America on 28 January 1992, and by President Boris N. Yeltsin of the Russian Federation on 29 January 1992, respectively. They propose radical cuts in the nuclear arsenals, and the strengthening of measures to stabilize relations between their countries. My Government believes that these initiatives are based on their sincere quest for peace and a new world order. In this context, my delegation also welcomes the formation of an international research centre in Russia by the United States, Russia and Germany to coordinate research in various fields, such as nuclear power plant safety, the elimination or alternative use of weapons of mass destruction, the safe burial of nuclear wastes, etc.

No one can deny that the present world situation is full of uncertainties which make it difficult for States to assess their legitimate security needs. The Republic of Korea supports the idea that a major stabilizing factor in this uncertain world is openness and transparency in matters relating to military security, since the absence of openness and transparency could lead to misconceptions and miscalculations, and thereby to tension between neighbouring States.

It is an innovative development in the field of global confidence and security-building that a universal and non-discriminatory arms register has been set up in the United Nations. We believe that this measure would enable

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United Nations Members to plan their security requirements on the basis of better information, thus reducing the scope for misunderstandings. In this regard, it is remarkable that the General Assembly last year adopted a resolution by an overwhelming majority calling upon all Member States to provide information annually for the register of arms transfers. It is noteworthy that the presidential statement of 31 January 1992, at the meeting of the United Nations Security Council at the level of heads of State and government, stressed the need for United Nations Member States to carry out the resolution.

The Conference on Disarmament has been assigned the important role of discussing and elaborating measures to ensure transparency in armaments. As a confidence-building and security-building measure of global dimension, transparency is believed to stand on its own as a new building block for arms control and disarmament. The Republic of Korea is firmly convinced of the potential of this Conference as a main contributor to the emerging security order. This is why my Government sincerely hopes that the CD will elaborate practical means to increase openness and transparency in the near future, and thereby really contribute to the enhancement of global security.

The chemical weapons convention is one of the most crucial and urgent items on the Conference's agenda, and all of us are expecting the conclusion of the convention before the end of this year. My delegation is pleased to see that the international community shares the political will to achieve this goal, and that the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons achieved remarkable progress during the last year. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Russian Ambassador Serguei Batsanov for the progress made under his able leadership, and to assure the final-stage Chairman, German Ambassador von Wagner, of the full support of my delegation in his endeavour to reach compromises on the essential unresolved issues. In the same context, I wish to extend my warm congratulations and respect to Senator Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia for the initiative he took last week. The timing and the manner in which the initiative was taken represents the ardent desire and readiness of the Australian Government to conclude the negotiations within this year. I sincerely hope that the Australian proposal will serve as a catalyst in accelerating the final-phase compromise.

Please allow me to briefly touch upon a couple of the essential pending issues of the CWC. First of all, the verification issue, which is considered the essence of the convention, still faces serious obstacles. As far as challenge inspections are concerned, my delegation shares with most other delegations the opinion that the warning time for the inspections should be kept as short as possible and that challenge proceedings should be kept simple to avoid undesirable delays during inspections. The reason is clear. A would-be violator should by no means be allowed time to destroy or hide evidence of non-compliance with the convention. Unless this could be guaranteed, the challenge proceeding would not become instrumental in achieving the purposes of the convention.

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It is true that there is apprehension about the possibility of abuse. We certainly do not ignore the possibility of industrial or military espionage. My delegation, therefore, has no objection to minimizing the possibility of abuse, but we have a firm belief that fears about abuse should not lead to a verification regime that is not conducive to effective deterrence. In this connection, my delegation has no difficulty in supporting the idea of "observer" participation in the inspection team, regardless of the observer's status, mandatory or not.

Important sectors of the chemical industry, including "relevant" ones, will be affected by implementation of the convention, since the convention's task is to deter, by its verification measures, all attempts to misuse the civilian chemical industry for the production of chemical weapons. In this regard, my delegation wishes to remind the negotiators of the chemical industry's concerns about obtaining a realistic balance between the management of available resources and satisfactory deterrence, without being overburdened with declarations and inspections.

As for the issue of the composition of the executive council, my delegation has no objection to the proposal that geographical equity and industrial development of a region be taken into consideration, and hopes that this issue will soon be settled so that it will not stand in the way of the final conclusion of the convention.

As declared on several occasions in the past, the Republic of Korea will join the forthcoming chemical weapons convention as soon as it is adopted. Our Government shares the view that acquiring universality in the membership of the convention is another important task to be fulfilled. To this end, the final stage of CWC negotiations should proceed in such a manner so as to attract as many States parties as possible. The collapse of the cold war does not by itself guarantee world peace. This is why we are convinced of the new potential of the Conference on Disarmament as a contributor to the emerging security order, and attach great importance to arms control and disarmament. The increasing number of aspirants to full CD membership is a clear reflection of concerns about disarmament. In this regard, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to call upon you to address the long-pending issue of the extension of CD membership, as soon as possible after the conclusion of the negotiations on the CWC, reminding you that at the end of last year the Republic of Korea presented its candidature for membership in the CD.

The end of the East-West rivalry and the coming of the global trend of reconciliation and cooperation have had a favourable impact on the Korean peninsula as well. Contacts and exchanges among the Powers that once belonged to the different ideological groupings on and around the Korean peninsula have increased considerably. As a result, expectations are growing that the counter-productive confrontations of the past will soon be a closed chapter in the history books, and that a durable peace will be achieved. It is our ardent hope that this opportunity for peace and eventual unification should not be missed.

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It is in this context that the Government and people of the Republic of Korea have been stepping up their efforts to come to terms with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and, on that basis, to seek vigorously the eventual reunification of the divided land. In doing so, the Republic of Korea intends to make the best use of improved conditions, and at the same time to contribute to world peace and security by playing its part in the international community.

Our undertakings have begun to pay off in many ways. First and foremost, I wish to draw your attention to the "Agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression and exchanges and cooperation between the South and the North" of Korea and the "Joint declaration of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula", which were effectuated last February.

The reconciliation agreement, which we refer to as the basic agreement, provides such main articles as the recognition of the mutual systems, non-interference in internal affairs, cooperation in the international arena, renunciation of the use of force, peaceful resolution of disputes, promotion of exchanges and cooperation in economic, social, cultural, scientific and humanitarian areas, and the establishment of various bodies that will implement the follow-up measures. This agreement serves as a basic charter that guarantees peaceful coexistence between the South and the North, and ensures the realization of the common aspiration of the Korean people to reach their goal of national reunification.

The joint denuclearization declaration assures that the two sides should not produce or store or use nuclear weapons. Further, the South and the North pledge that they will not have nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities. The declaration also has articles on verification and on the establishment of a Joint Nuclear Control Commission.

With the effectuation of the above-mentioned agreements, a political committee, a military committee, and a committee on exchanges and cooperation, as well as the Joint Nuclear Control Commission, were formed and their first meetings were held this month.

Also noteworthy is North Korea's recent indication of its readiness to allow IAEA nuclear inspection of its nuclear facilities by June 1992. As North Korea is a long-time signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, the signing of the IAEA safeguards agreement was long overdue. However, despite the long lapse of time, we should now commend North Korea for its decision to sign the safeguards agreement. In this connection, I would like to take this occasion to report to the Conference that there was a symbolic instance of South-North cooperation here in Geneva too. I and my North Korean counterpart, Ambassador Ri, jointly signed a letter asking the Secretary-General of the CD to distribute to the member States the texts of the above-mentioned South-North accords as an official document of the CD, which will be distributed as CD/1147. Though it may appear to be a small move, it is the first of its kind in the relations between South and North Korea. Further, the message that both of us intend to give by such documents amounts to a pledge to the international community to faithfully

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abide by the agreements made between the two sides. Seeing it as a precious bud which needs encouragement from the international community, I would not like to let it go unnoticed.

As the two Koreas move onto the untrodden plain of reconciliation and cooperation, we are faced with new challenges and problems. The most important task before us is undoubtedly the swift and unequivocal implementation of the recent agreements and commitments. In this regard, I note with some apprehension that North Korea, during the first three committee meetings, showed its reluctance to work out concrete measures for the implementation of the basic agreement and that she turned down our proposal of pilot projects, which included such reconciliation measures as the reunion of dispersed family members in the spirit of humanitarianism, and the cessation of slander and vilification directed towards each other. We presented those projects in the belief that they are urgent and easy to carry out.

The nuclear issue still remains a matter of grave and urgent concern. On a bilateral level, the South and the North reached an understanding to commence mutual nuclear inspections from around mid-June. We sincerely hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abides by the above understanding. On the international level, the world community is waiting for North Korea's early ratification of the IAEA safeguards agreement and strict compliance with it. We earnestly hope that North Korea meets the expectations of the international community.

The Republic of Korea firmly believes that the faithful implementation of the basic agreement and the resolution of the nuclear issue will bridge the gap made deeper by long separation and will restore confidence, thus paving the way for reunification. It is with this view that the Government of the Republic of Korea on several occasions urged the Northern brother to swiftly remove all the stumbling-blocks, including nuclear issues, for further progress in inter-Korean relations.

History will record what the international community has achieved in making the world safer in recent years. Among them, the endeavours of this Conference will find their rightful place. However, we still have a long way to go. The Republic of Korea will spare no effort in doing its part internationally as well as regionally.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Prakash Shah.

Mr. SHAH (India): Let me first of all welcome the very important statement made by the President of the Swiss Confederation this morning at the beginning of the session. Mr. President, allow me also to congratulate you on your assumption of this office of the presidency in the Conference on Disarmament. Your stewardship so far has only confirmed my delegation's faith in your sincerity and fairness and in your undoubted abilities to guide the deliberations forward. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation

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for the able way in which Ambassador Mutuale Kikanke of Zaire guided our work during the previous month. I would also like to extend a very friendly and sincere welcome to Ambassador Berasategui in his new and well-deserved incarnation as Secretary-General of the Conference and as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

All of us have at one time or the other spoken of the massive changes in the Eastern part of Europe and the consequent emergence of a number of independent countries. Much has been said about the implications of these dramatic changes on politics, economics and security of this and other regions. What has not been adequately emphasized is that, with the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, nuclear proliferation issues have assumed a qualitatively and quantitatively new dimension. A crucial dimension of global security today is the cloud of uncertainty surrounding control over some of the existing nuclear arsenals. Peace and security could be threatened by the frightening possibility of the proliferation of ready-made nuclear weapons by a variety of means and methods. The number of nuclear-weapon Powers has increased not because a new nuclear weapon has been produced by a non-nuclear-weapon State but because there has been massive vertical proliferation in the last 23 years since the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty was negotiated in 1968. Despite the NPT, there are today more nuclear weapons stationed in a larger number of countries with more tenuous control over their use than at any other time. And yet, what seems to concern the world is not the danger of nuclear conflagration from existing nuclear warheads spread around, as it were, the warehouses in several countries, but the obsessive apprehension that the monopoly of existing nuclear-weapon Powers over nuclear weapons may be broken by some "irresponsible" country from the South. In this vastly changed scenario the question arises whether it is realistic to achieve non-proliferation through a treaty signed in 1968 which obviously and logically could not have taken into account this new and frightening reality.

Ever since India, along with seven other countries, proposed a nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 1965 in General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX), we have repeatedly urged that non-proliferation must be addressed in all its aspects if humanity is to be saved from a nuclear disaster. Surely, if this had happened, we would not have been in a situation today where we have a number of differing estimates of how many nuclear warheads exist in the States which used to be jointly described as the Soviet Union. We would certainly not be in a situation where the question of accountability and control of large numbers of nuclear warheads is so unresolved. We would not have been worried, as we worry today, about what to do with those brilliant scientists in the former Soviet Union whose expertise is to produce nuclear weapons. The world would not have been apprehensive, as we are today, of smuggling of fissionable material or clandestine transfer of a nuclear weapon to terrorists. But the hard truth is that we are in this situation because the overwhelming focus of all efforts at non-proliferation has been to prevent non-nuclear-weapon countries from acquiring nuclear weapons, while nuclear weapons proliferated in geometric proportions, new generations of nuclear weapons were invented and deployed and greater sophistication in death and destruction achieved in nuclear-weapon States. There are many factors responsible for this sad state of affairs, and the complacency generated by

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the illusion that a discriminatory NPT will solve the proliferation problems is one of them. It is the failure of the NPT to provide an acceptable balance of mutual responsibility and obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States which not only allowed but may even have encouraged proliferation of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. Since 1968, several non-nuclear-weapon States have developed or acquired sophisticated technology in the nuclear field. While such knowledge is primarily devoted to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it often does not exclude the ability to use it for military purposes. While non-nuclear-weapon States such as India scrupulously adhered to a policy of non-proliferation despite acquiring the capability to use nuclear energy for military purposes, and refrained from assisting any other State to develop nuclear weapons, there was free and frantic competition amongst nuclear-weapon States to reach the pinnacle of achievement in acquiring nuclear destructive capacity to destroy the world many times over.

This is today's reality. To ignore reality, to emphasise it where convenient and to deny it where it is inconvenient, to behave as if the major issue today is horizontal proliferation of the kind that worried some people 15 or 20 years ago while ignoring the horrors through proliferation which can take place because of political and constitutional changes, and because of vertical proliferation, is to ignore the lessons of history. And where history is forgotten it unfortunately tends to repeat itself.

It is in this context, not so much in anger at this grim reality but more in sorrow that the real issues have been ignored, that my delegation once again wishes to urge all members of this Conference, and indeed of the United Nations, that the only realistic solution to stop proliferation is to have a global and comprehensive approach to the problem. Regional arrangements, bilateral agreements, nuclear-weapon-free zones and other technical fixes, which have become popular over the last two decades, have clearly failed to arrest the number of nuclear weapons from growing qualitatively or quantitatively. Nor have they succeeded in preventing an increase in the number of countries with possible control over divided nuclear arsenals. As stated by my Prime Minister at the recent Security Council summit meeting in New York, while we share the concerns with regard to proliferation, we do not believe that partial measures of prevention or punitive action on a selective basis will achieve desired results. Just as chemical and biological weapons are matters of global concern to be dealt with globally, nuclear weapons and the nuclear threat cannot be addressed without a global approach. A new international understanding and consensus on what constitutes non-proliferation is urgently required so that the pursuit of a global approach to non-proliferation which is universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory is seriously attempted.

When India presented a specific action plan for elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in stages, eventually leading to a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world, as an ultimate goal at the third special session on disarmament in 1988, few people gave it the attention it deserved. There are those who talk of non-proliferation but are afraid of even accepting a nuclear-weapon-free world as the ultimate goal. What we put

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forward in 1988 as an action plan for all to follow is what we have followed all these years and what we are prepared to do in future. Our programme proposes elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in stages, and in a systematic, rational and practical time-frame aims to achieve, in relation to nuclear weapons, what we are doing here in the Conference on Disarmament in relation to chemical weapons. Our plan recognises the need for flexibility in the staging of these measures. It calls upon all States, nuclear, threshold and others, to accept equal obligations without discrimination. It provides for a stage-by-stage controlled slide down the ladder to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

When the action plan was put forward, some nuclear-weapon States expressed difficulty in accepting these ideas in view of their adherence to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. The doctrine, we were told, was anchored in the specific context of East-West confrontation and the cold war. There is now no such confrontation. The cold war is over. The nuclear stand-off is a thing of the past and nuclear deterrence has become an irrelevant doctrine. What then is preventing the serious consideration of this plan at the global level? Why is it that there are no constructive suggestions to make this plan an acceptable one? Why does the world continue to put its faith in achieving non-proliferation through a discriminatory Treaty which was written in 1968 and which could not have taken into account the realities of the present situation and technological advances, which should be the basis for our future cooperative effort to achieve nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation?

We are encouraged that there are some positive signs of changes in the thinking of at least some nuclear-weapon Powers on this crucial issue and at this crucial juncture. In his address to the Conference on Disarmament of 12 February 1992, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of the Russian Federation acknowledged that the total elimination of nuclear weapons would offer the best solution. We invite those who believe in it to work with us in reaching that goal. We are encouraged that the early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty has been advocated not only by the Russian Federation but by many countries even within the Western group. We see greater acceptance of the need for a fundamental review of the entire military and strategic situation in the world and consequently the revision of old military doctrines including nuclear deterrence. In keeping with our long-standing proposal for an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, we were heartened by the proposals made by Foreign Minster Kozyrev regarding non-targeting of strategic nuclear weapons, taking these weapons off their alert status and keeping delivery vehicles and warheads separate. We see progress in the thinking, notably of the Russian Federation, that all nuclear-weapon States should join the process of nuclear disarmament.

Another long-standing issue which now assumes critical importance in the context of announced unilateral decisions to cut the number of nuclear weapons and to destroy nuclear warheads is the question of fissile material. Experts indicate that the destruction or dismantling of the nuclear warheads in the States which constituted the erstwhile Soviet Union, variously estimated at between 27,000 and 32,000 warheads, could result in the release of fissile

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material estimated in hundreds of tonnes. What will happen to this fissile material? Will it be redeployed in technologically more advanced nuclear weapons? Or will it be surrendered to IAEA or some other agency for generation of nuclear energy for development? It was apprehension on this score which prompted India to seek a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons and fissile material as early as SSOD-II in 1982 and subsequently to present a paper at SSOD-III on new technologies and the qualitative arms race. Even though these aspects of proliferation are less publicized because they are less convenient, they are equally issues of major concern and should be addressed without delay. To dismiss proposals to freeze production of fissile material as outdated is to ignore yet again the reality.

Given the fact that all States are concerned with nuclear disarmament, we believe that the ideas outlined above should be discussed in a comprehensive manner and in a formal setting in the context of agenda items 2 and 3 of this Conference. The issue of a nuclear test ban has assumed increasing importance in the present-day context. It is therefore logical to hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 1 of the CD this year should be re-established with an improved mandate after thorough discussions which were undertaken in the Ad Hoc Committee last year. On many occasions in the past, my delegation has pointed out that while a lot of groundwork has already been done on the issue of a nuclear test ban, the stage has now been reached when there should be a consensus amongst States to seriously negotiate on a nuclear-test-ban treaty. It is heartening that a large number of countries in Europe have begun to see the need for a nuclear-test-ban treaty. It is our hope that all member States of the CD will soon arrive at a consensus on this issue.

The recommendations regarding priorities in the field of disarmament endorsed by the international community at SSOD-I have never been translated into universally accepted norms, principles and processes to deal with the dangers and to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons. The adoption of an "arms control" approach, as distinct and different from the "disarmament" framework, has failed to arrest proliferation and is unlikely to provide a viable paradigm for the future. Closed-door "clubs", "groups" and "regimes" created to impose unilateral restrictions on trade in technology, equipment and material on a discriminatory basis will not prevent proliferation. Non-proliferation, whether of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons or biological weapons, cannot be achieved by proposals aimed only at arms reduction, though they are welcome. Nor can initiatives which in reality only preserve the monopoly of a few States over weapons of mass destruction, missile technology and export markets for conventional weapons contribute to prevention of proliferation. To justify preservation of such monopolies by hypothesizing potential threats from developing countries not only smacks of pandering to the vested interests of the scientific-military-industrial complexes but introduces a dangerous North-South dimension in nuclear disarmament which is, and should be addressed as, a global issue which does not need such confrontation.

Within the context of this arms limitation approach, the United States of America and the former Soviet Union and now the Russian Federation have announced unilateral cuts in certain categories of nuclear weapons. Any

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attempt to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and warheads is indeed a welcome step. We commend them, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, who have announced their intention to reduce the numbers and we call upon those nuclear-weapon Powers who have not made any move in this regard to take matching positive steps. However, much more confidence would be generated and greater credibility created if the Conference on Disarmament were to be informed, from time to time, about the programme of action to implement the announced cuts, the number of nuclear weapons or warheads destroyed or dismantled, the manner of such destruction, the use to which fissile material removed from those weapons had been put, and so on. If transparency is important in regard to conventional armaments, would it not be equally applauded if practiced in regard to destruction and dismantling of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction?

Building confidence through transparency and dialogue is a cornerstone of India's foreign policy. In recent months, high-level political contacts between India and China have further advanced the bonds of friendship. We have also agreed on a number of measures to reduce tension along our borders including regular meetings of border personnel, establishment of communication links at border points and prior intimation regarding military exercises. Economic, social and cultural cooperation in diverse fields under the umbrella of SAARC has been stepped up among the nations of the Indian subcontinent.

Agreements have been concluded between India and Pakistan on advance notification of military exercises, manoeuvres and troop movements, prevention of airspace violations, permitting overflights and landings of military aircraft and setting up of hotlines between the two sides.

In the field of chemical weapons, in anticipation of the early conclusion of a multilateral global convention on their prohibition now being negotiated here in the CD, India proposed a bilateral arrangement with Pakistan last year. We are happy to inform that at the last round of Foreign-Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan, it was agreed to consider issuing a joint declaration on chemical weapons and to convene a meeting of experts of the two sides to exchange views on a bilateral agreement to ban the development, production, deployment and use of chemical weapons.

In the nuclear field, an agreement between India and Pakistan on the prohibition of attacks on each other's nuclear facilities was signed in December 1988. I am happy to inform that lists of these nuclear facilities were finally exchanged under this agreement on 1 January 1992.

In 1950, India recommended the creation of a United Nations Peace Fund to channelize savings resulting from controls on the growth of armaments as a "peace dividend", a phrase that has gained currency after the INF Treaty was signed in 1987. The arms build-up, spiralled by the increased military expenditure of the big military spenders and exporters of armaments, affects developing countries doubly: in the first place, the proliferating expenditure on armaments reduces the resources available for economic development and growth; and secondly, it fuels further competitive expenditure on account of perceived defence requirements for the security needs of the

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developing countries. India has all along advocated that steps should be taken to curb this tendency and trend. Unfortunately, without self-restraint on the part of the big industrialized arms suppliers and curtailment of financial assistance for purchase of weapons, this may just be a pipedream. We are impressed that everybody wants transparency in arms transfers but we are concerned that transparency is becoming an end in itself. In our view, transparency would serve no purpose if it does not achieve the objective of reduction in arms transfers.

India is fully committed to the conclusion of a universal and non-discriminatory chemical weapons convention, which is being negotiated at the CD, by the end of 1992. While it is essential that the convention does not have any loophole for developing chemical weapons, it is equally essential to ensure that States parties to this convention are not subjected to a dual regime of controls. It is necessary that all existing discriminatory restrictions on trade relating to scheduled chemicals as well as equipment are removed immediately upon entry into force of the convention. Given the fact that the convention will contain effective measures to control any form of proliferation of chemical weapons and would also have the force of effective sanctions against potential violators, there is no reason why States parties to the convention should continue to be subjected to any unilaterally imposed punitive control regime outside the convention, which is essentially discriminatory in nature. We believe that a successful resolution of this issue in the chemical weapons negotiations will ensure a healthy universality for the convention. The ideal way to ensure universality to this convention is to make it attractive for countries to join it. To this end, the interest of those who possess chemical weapons must be matched by the interests of those who do not, and yet are prepared to accept curbs on their chemical industry, which plays an important role in their development, in the hope of achieving enhanced security.

The routine verification system under the convention must ensure that the need for compliance is centred only around the relevant chemical industry, is focused, is easily implementable and is affordable. It is important that the selection process for inspection is non-discriminatory and is designed for equal application in all regions of the world.

The proposed CWC envisages challenge inspection procedures as a unique measure in global disarmament arrangements. Once the request for a challenge inspection is received, the area of interest is enlarged and becomes the concern of all States parties, who are then legitimately involved in seeking reassurances that the convention is not being violated. The multilateral character of the challenge inspection, therefore, needs to be ensured. All States should be concerned with minimizing the possible misuse of the challenge provisions through unfounded and frivolous requests, which would not only damage the international reputation of the challenged State, but also result in a waste of resources of the organization. This requires a very definite role for the organization, and also requires that the challenge provisions are practical, with equal rights for the challenged and requesting State party. It is for this reason that India has supported the provisions of

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"managed access" and other practical measures envisaged in CD/CW/WP.352, put forward by the delelgations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia.

All States parties have the right to be represented on the executive council, taking into account the need for representation based on geographical spread. However, within the regions, it is essential that due weight is given to those with a developed chemical industry since they will clearly be affected much more than those who do not have it. The industrial weighting could be calculated on the basis of the total production, range of chemicals produced as well as number of facilities in a given State party.

The development of schedules and guidelines under the convention has taken place under presently existing conditions. The convention should be able to take into account future scientific and technological developments, and should not be fossilized. Accordingly, it is necessary to have a fairly simple amendment procedure at least for the technical aspects of the convention. At the same time, attempts should not be made to include chemicals which are used in legitimate peaceful activities, such as herbicides and riot control agents.

Concern has been expressed about the ability of CD to negotiate a CWC by the autumn of this year. In my delegation's view, it is possible for us in the CD to have such a convention in place this year provided we resist the temptation to overload it with excessive details and provided the concerns of the countries working towards economic growth and development are not ignored.

I had occasion to commend the initiative of the Australian Foreign Minister presented to the CD last week, to speed up the process of negotiation of the CWC. We are ready to cooperate fully with Ambassador von Wagner, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, regardless of the procedure that he decides to adopt as a basis for our future work. We would, of course, be indicating to him further our views and concerns on the major unresolved issues during the consultations he proposes to hold in the inter-sessional period.

Apprehensions have often been expressed about the role of the Conference on Disarmament after the CWC. My delegation does not share these apprehensions. We have a number of items of the agenda which are as important as the CWC and the CD will be contributing greatly to the disarmament process by taking them up seriously for negotiations. If the Conference on Disarmament, for some reason, does become irrelevant after CWC, as some countries seem to fear, it will surely not be due to lack of subjects to be discussed or issues to be negotiated. The danger lies in the lack of political will to do so, fear perhaps of transparency and deliberate downgrading of the multilaterial process in priority areas of disarmament.

Before I end, let me, on a personal note, express my sadness at the departure from Geneva on transfer of two of our most distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom and Ambassador Donowaki of Japan, who are making their last appearances in this forum as ambassadors of disarmament of their respective countries. I want to thank them for their contribution to

(Mr. Shah, India)

our work and I wish them well in their future activities and life. I should also like to request the delegation of Ethiopia to convey our good wishes to Ambassador Kongit Sinegiorgis, who will also be leaving us shortly.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of India for his very important statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Shannon.

Mr. SHANNON (Canada): Mr. President, as this is my first intervention during your presidency, allow me to begin by welcoming your accession to the position and assuring you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. I would also, at this final plenary meeting of the first part of the 1992 session, join with those who have already noted with regret the impending departures of our colleagues Ambassadors Solesby, Donowaki and Sinegiorgis, whose past contributions to our work have been of such importance. More personally, they have been helpful colleagues and good friends. I and my fellow Canadians will miss them very much. In the case of Ambassador Sinegiorgis, we are very pleased that she will soon become her country's Ambassador to my country. I also want to thank both Ambassadors Solesby and Donowaki for their wery thoughtful statements this morning.

I will be brief and I will limit my comments to the chemical weapons convention. Last Thursday, we witnessed a highly important development in our efforts to finalize a convention, and that, of course, was the presentation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, of a draft of a model compromise text for the convention. In our view, this text represents an extraordinary achievement, both in terms of its substance and in terms of the remarkable amount of effort involved. My authorities are deeply appreciative of the Australian Government's initiative, and welcome this document as a very valuable contribution to finalizing the convention in the next four months.

My authorities also welcome and applaud the strong, positive response given to this initiative by so many delegations at last Thursday's meeting. In view of this support, we believe that this document will provide many valuable bases for resolving the outstanding issues still before us. We therefore join the Australian and other delegations in urging the Ad Hoc Committee and its Chairman to begin immediately to give the fullest possible consideration to its various proposals in their future work.

In this respect, my authorities are pleased to note the programme of action proposed by Ambassador von Wagner, in particular his intention to use the Australian text in conjunction with the "rolling text" and other documents as the basis for further private and open-ended consultations over the next six weeks, with a view to producing an overall Chairman's text as soon as possible. We therefore fully endorse his intention to make the maximum use of the inter-sessional period, and hope that it will be possible to produce this final compromise text by the beginning of our spring session on 11 May, or very soon thereafter.

(Mr. Shannon, Canada)

It should be needless to say that my delegation and I offer Ambassador von Wagner our full cooperation and assistance in these final months to find the necessary compromises to produce a final draft convention. In so doing, however, my delegation will continue to strive to achieve a convention that is truly global, comprehensive, and - above all - effectively verifiable. As other speakers today have noted, effective verification is the key to ensuring the success of the proposed convention - the essential element that will take us beyond existing agreements and establish a new bench-mark. And effective verification depends on the interdependence of all phases in the proposed verification process, both routine and challenge, which we see as inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

Accordingly, my delegation will continue to seek a routine inspection regime that covers all facilities, including "capable" facilities, that might be engaged in activities that are relevant to the goals of the convention. And we will continue to seek a challenge inspection regime that provides the fullest possible degree of access to the challenged site consistent with the intent of article IX, using managed access as necessary; a regime that requires the shortest possible time-frames, to forestall concealment of evidence; and a regime that contains sufficiently strong provisions on "perimeters" and "securing the site" to enable the inspection team to discharge their functions.

On the basis, we would be concerned if the proposals in the Australian text covering these matters were to be weakened, or to be compromised by changes in the relevant articles or annexes. In our view, the text as it now stands still falls short of the requisite level of intrusiveness consistent with credible verification, and can be improved. But it would be an acceptable bottom line for finalizing our negotiations.

The presentation of the Australian text opens a window of opportunity that we must take maximum advantage of if we are to achieve our common goal of finalizing the convention this year. It is in this spirit that Canada supports this very substantial work which Australia has placed at our disposal.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Dichev.

Mr. DICHEV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on your election to this high post of the Conference on Disarmament, and to assure you of the readiness of the Bulgarian delegation to assist in the discharge of your responsible duties. We are convinced that your diplomatic skill, tactfulness and vast knowledge are valuable assets in achieving the goals of this unique forum for multilateral negotiations. Your accession to the Chair coincides with an important, I would say even a decisive period in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. This is a period, indeed, when at stake is the issue whether the chemical weapons convention will be or will not be this year. Your personal contribution to resolve this issue is certainly a major one.

(Mr. Dichev, Bulgaria)

I am particularly pleased to extend my congratulations also to His Excellency Ambassador Vicente Berasategui on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General. His rich experience in multilateral diplomacy is a blessing for the Conference on Disarmament not only with regard to the finalization of the chemical weapons convention, but also for the period immediately following it. For this will be an intense period, and the CD should rightfully consider itself most lucky to be able to benefit from personalities like His Excellency Vicente Berasategui. The Bulgarian delegation shall do its best to contribute to his laudable efforts.

I am happy to extend a traditional Bulgarian dobre doshli, which means "warm welcome", to the CD to the heads of the CD delegations of the Kingdom of Belgium and the Republic of Mongolia, His Excellency Ambassador M. Servais, and His Excellency Ambassador S. Yumjav, to wish them lots of success ahead.

My delegation listened with great attention to the speech of the President of the country which has given shelter to the Conference on Disarmament and its delegations. We all owe much to Switzerland and its Government for our excellent conditions of work. The Bulgarian delegation welcomes the statement of the President of the Swiss Confederation, His Excellency Mr. René Felber, as a firm indication of his country's commitment to the noble endeavours of the Conference on Disarmament.

At its 19 March plenary meeting the Conference on Disarmament heard His Excellency the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Evans. He introduced a paper which my delegation, just like many other delegations, assesses highly. We see it as appearing at the right time just as the need was felt for an accelerator of the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons on the few remaining outstanding problems. The Australian paper is a feasible compromise effort which, together with the "rolling text", could bring our debate to a successful outcome. It is a matter of fact that our Australian colleagues in Canberra and here, in Geneva, have done a great job to put together such a text, something I should like to thank them for.

In this connection I might also recall to the distinguished colleagues that the current "rolling text" has been created after lots of sweat throughout the lengthy negotiating process, therefore it is logical that it serves as basis for the future convention. Consequently, in the view of my delegation successive versions of the "rolling text" should be titled "Revision 1", "Revision 2", etc., in accordance with existing United Nations practice.

As to the Australian idea to hold a ministerial-level conference late this summer, my delegation is ready to assist for a mutually acceptable settlement of all outstanding issues of the future chemical weapons convention by that time.

Challenge inspection is a key element in the monitoring system of the future convention. As to its universality we think that this unique international treaty should reliably guarantee the balance between monitoring

(Mr. Dichev, Bulgaria)

efficiency and protection of incoming confidential information. Non-resolved issues like the role of the executive council, the dangers of abuse and the question of the observer should be subordinated to the goal of guaranteeing to the highest degree the efficiency and objectives of the convention. Such objectives could hardly be fostered by politicizing the issue of inspections at any stage of their implementation. My delegation is in favour also of the new approach to integrate a major and relevant part of international chemical industry in a more comprehensive system of verification. We should not lose sight of the fact, however, that extending the scope of verification in the civil chemical industry should be in tune with the limited human and financial resources of the envisaged international organization. Therefore, normative financial provisions ought to be sufficiently precise, they should take into account also the legitimate interests of States parties.

The Bulgarian delegation welcomes the encouraging results of the efforts to coordinate the texts on the criteria and composition of the executive council. The conceptual approach has brought the different variants down to just two, where the common elements can be reached by specific text formulations. In this connection may I commend Ambassador Tibor Tóth and wish him a successful conclusion to the responsible task he has taken upon himself, a task to which he devotes so much time and energy? In this regard I wish to raise a point of a more general nature. This particular problem as well as all other provisions of the future convention should be resolved by the 39 CD member States and the 40 or so observers. A prime objective, however, should be to arrive at balanced decisions capable of satisfying not only those 79 or so States, but also many other United Nations Member States which ought to join the convention. This is why the Conference on Disarmament should take into account also the legitimate interests of countries that are not among its members but are, nevertheless, active participants in the international community. For instance, to the difference of other geographic regions the only region to have increased its member States is Eastern Europe. This region may yet increase in member States. It could be that some of those newly formed States would not necessarily belong to the Eastern European Group, rather to some other one. Be it as it may, it is a matter of fact that the European process started with 35 States. Today it numbers 51 States, with the new countries having found a deserving place in it. To my delegation this is an indication that such developments speak in favour of the existing United Nations regional groups. Furthermore, it is obvious that the composition of the executive council should reflect in a just and equitable manner the membership of the future convention. In light of these considerations my delegation submits that there is room for further clarification of the ways and means to allocate seats on the executive council for the various regional groups. My delegation holds the view also that the regional groups furnish the framework for coordinating the degree of implementation of industrial and other criteria, including the well-known principle of rotation.

To conclude my statement may I be allowed to appeal to the delegations in this chamber not to miss the opportunity to concentrate their efforts to conclude the final text of the future convention, so that the CD may continue to function as a reliable and unique international forum in the field of

(Mr. Dichev, Bulgaria)

global disarmament? The Bulgarian delegation is optimistic and has faith in the successful finalization of the convention by the end of this year. May I assure you, Mr. President, you the representative of a country having traditional excellent relations with Bulgaria, and through you all my distinguished colleagues, that my delegation would spare no effort in the accomplishment of this lofty goal? I submit that it is most important for the CD at this stage not to lose momentum!

Finally, let me say a few parting words with respect to three distinguished colleagues and friends. This plenary meeting is the last in which we had the pleasure to benefit from the active participation of the representatives of Japan, the United Kingdom and Ethiopia. His Excellency Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki and their Excellencies Ambassadors Tessa Solesby and Kongit Sinegiorgis. Their contribution to the CD, and to the drafting of the convention in particular, is a most tangible one. We will certainly miss them, because over the next two CD sessions this year we will have to overcome the remaining differences. But we know that in their hearts and minds they will be with us, and that they will continue their endeavour to achieve the lofty objectives of the future chemical weapons convention. May I take this opportunity to cordially wish to those three distinguished friends and representatives of three leading nations of the world in the Conference on Disarmament sound health, happiness and lots of success in their activities to promote the peaceful development of our planet?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and my country. I now give the floor to Mrs. Clauwaert, the representative of Venezuela.

Mrs. CLAUWAERT (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): First of all, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Venezuela I wish to inform you of our special pleasure at seeing you Chair the work of this forum. We are aware of your extensive abilities, your personal career and your knowledge of the subjects that we are to deal with, so that the Conference will benefit from your skilled leadership. We extend our thanks to the permanent representatives of Yugoslavia and Zaire, Ambassadors Naste Calovski and Mutuale Kikanke, for the effective way in which they guided our work. It is also appropriate to congratulate Ambassador Vicente Berasategui on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Ambassador Berasategui has the best qualities to discharge such an important function. We would also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki of Japan, Ambassador Tessa Solesby of the United Kingdom and Ambassador Kongit Sinegiorgis of Ethiopia, who made important contributions to the work of this Conference. We wish them success in their new functions. We have the honour of having heard today the President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency René Felber. We express thanks for the constructive contributions made by the Swiss Government to the work of this Conference in its capacity as an observer.

(Mrs. Clauwaert, Venezuela)

Now I wish to refer briefly at this plenary meeting to the subject of the prohibition of chemical weapons. The Government of Venezuela attaches very high priority to the early conclusion of the convention whereby chemical weapons will be completely and generally banned, and supports all efforts that are made to that end. It is for this reason that as members of the Conference on Disarmament we have been participating actively in the negotiations on the convention, and we are committed to its conclusion this year. This commitment is set forth explicitly in the recent declaration signed by the heads of State of the member countries of the Andean Group in Cartegena de Indias, Colombia on 4 December 1991 on renunciation of weapons of mass destruction. In that declaration Venezuela announced its intention to be an original signatory of the convention. We have expectations of an early conclusion of the negotiations, but in order to finally attain the desired and agreed goal, additional and constant efforts will be required as well as an extraordinary display of political will to solve the problems that are still awaiting solution in order to arrive at agreed formulas on challenge inspection, verification, membership of the executive council, economic and technological development, old chemical weapons and financial aspects of the organization. In this context we welcome with great pleasure and interest the proposal introduced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Senator Gareth Evans, in the Conference on Disarmament, on 19 March last, concerning the draft convention for a complete ban on chemical weapons. We consider that the initiative submitted by the Australian Government can serve as an important element in the ongoing negotiations, in view of their urgent nature. This proposal contains a series of constructive suggestions that should be taken into consideration in the negotiating process - for example, the structure it suggests for the convention; and concrete recommendations in order to try to resolve the outstanding issues that require a decision. It is to be hoped that these suggestions will help us to achieve a balanced agreement, and to facilitate the convening of a ministrial meeting designed to give a last push to the negotiations. It is our understanding that the intention of this proposal, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia stressed in his statement, is not to replace in any way the work and the achievements so far of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons on the draft convention, or to establish a parallel track. This is work which has taken up a great deal of time and effort on our part, and which should not be sidestepped, but there is a need for concrete contributions from our countries in order to give impetus to the negotiations.

We would like to express appreciation to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner, for the persistent efforts that he has been making to solve certain delicate aspects. These efforts certainly call for cooperation from the members of the Conference. Ambassador von Wagner can count on the full support of our delegation in the pursuit of this process. In this context we endorse the suggestion that the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons should carry out consultations in the inter-sessional period of the Conference on Disarmament so that, in so far as he is able, he can submit a specific text at the beginning of the second part of the session of the Conference on Disarmament, in May 1992.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Venezuela for her statement and for her kind words addressed to the Chair. We have reached the end of the speakers' list for today. I would like to know whether any other delegation wishes to take the floor. I see none. Before proceeding to other matters, and in the light of the information we have received during this meeting that the permanment representative of Ethiopia is also going to leave us soon, and since she is not in the room, it will be my pleasure to address to her directly on behalf of all of you best wishes in her future mission as her country's representative in Canada. I wish her good luck and I ask her delegation to convey to her our best wishes for success in her new tasks on the part of the members of the Conference on Disarmament. During these meetings, and today in particular, we are witnessing large-scale departures by many eminent members of our Conference. I would simply hope that this process will come to a stop, at least during Algeria's presidency, and that the positive elements in the Conference will not leave us during the few days for which the Algerian delegation will be in the Chair.

I will now pass to another matter. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events had intended today to introduce the sixth report on the Group of Scientific Experts' second technical test, GSETT-2, and the Ad Hoc Group's progress report. Mr. Ola Dahlman has informed me that as he is indisposed he has been unable to leave Sweden and therefore cannot speak to you as planned. He asks me to inform you that the English text of the sixth report on the Group of Scientific Experts' second technical test has been distributed today as CD/1144. The text of the document in all the other official languages of the Conference will be distributed during the break between the first and second parts of the annual session. The text of the progress report, on the thirty-third session of the Group has been distributed today as CD/1145 in all the official languages of the Conference. Consequently, Mr. Dahlman will be introducting these two reports at the plenary session on Thursday, 14 May. In accordance with our usual practice, I will place before the Conference for adoption the recommendation contained in paragraph 11 of the progress report at the plenary meeting scheduled for Thursday 21 May. The recommendation relates to the date of the next session of the Ad Hoc Group, which should take place between 27 July and 7 August 1992. The Conference will also be taking note of the sixth report on the Group of Scientific Experts' second technical test contained in document CD/1144.

I would also like to inform you that the consultations on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "nuclear test ban", will have to continue before the Conference is in a position to take a decision. I have already referred to the role played in these consultations by our friend Ambassador Donowaki, and I would like to thank him very much for the way in which he has worked to try to achieve an agreement. The special coordinator on item 1 of the agenda, Ambassador Shah of India, will be holding informal consultations open to all

(The President)

delegations tomorrow, Friday 27 March at 3 p.m. in this conference room; interpretation will be provided. I hope that we will then be able to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of the second session of the Conference.

At my request the secretariat has distributed today the timetable of meetings that the Conference and its subsidiary bodies are due to hold during the first week of the second part of the annual session. The timetable was compiled in consultation with the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies and, as usual, it is purely indicative and can be changed if the need arises. As you will note, the first informal meeting on the substance of agenda item 3, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", is scheduled for Thursday 14 May, immediately after the plenary meeting that day, as decided by the Conference at its 617th plenary meeting. If there are no objections, I will take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): As we also decided at our 618th plenary meeting, the special coordinator appointed to hold consultations on the question of transparency in armaments Ambassador Mounir Zahran of Egypt, will be holding informal consultations open to all delegations immediately after the end of this plenary meeting, in this room.

I would also like to inform members of the Conference that the consultations on the Disarmament Commission which were scheduled for today at 3 p.m. in room VIII, have been cancelled.

Since our order of business for today has been completed, I will now adjourn this meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday 14 May at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.